

REMARKS

By the foregoing amendment, the specification has been amended to correct minor typographical errors in the text, claims 2-6 have been amended, and new claims 7 and 8 have been added. No new matter has been added. Thus, Claims 1-8 are currently pending in the application.

In the Office Action mailed March 28, 2003, the Examiner indicated that Claims 1 and 2 were allowed. The Examiner is respectfully thanked for indicating such allowance. New claims 7 and 8, corresponding to Claims 1 and 2, have been added to broaden the claims by eliminating the reference numbers included in claims 1 and 2. It is submitted that new claims 7 and 8 are likewise allowable over the cited prior art.

With regard to claims 3-6, the Examiner withdrew the previous rejections, but presented a new ground for rejection of these claims, finding the claims unpatentable under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 6,053,785 to Kato, et al., in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,811,560 to Nakase, et al. It is noted that claims 3-6 have been amended. To the extent that this rejection remains applicable to the claims currently pending, Applicants hereby traverse the rejection, as follows.

With regard to the rejection of claim 3, the Examiner takes the position that Kato discloses each of the limitations of claim 3, except the connection into which the exhaust passage opens being formed in a side wall of the case member, and a lid detachably coupled to the connection, the missing limitation being provided by combining Kato with Nakase.

Applicants submit that the references, even if combined (not admitted), do not teach or suggest all of the limitations of claim 3, as amended. Applicants submit that neither Kato, nor Nakase, nor the combination thereof discloses or suggests at least

the limitations of a connection being formed in a side wall of the case member, the catalytic converter being disposed in a space surrounded by an exhaust passage-defining member and a detachable lid, and the exhaust passage-defining member being coupled to said connection to permit the exhaust gas to flow thereinto, as claimed in claim 3, as amended.

For at least this reason it is submitted that claim 3 is allowable over the cited prior art. As claim 3 is allowable, Applicants submit that claims 4 and 5, which depend from claim 3, are likewise allowable.

Applicants further submit that neither Kato, nor Nakase, nor the combination thereof discloses or suggests at least the limitations of the catalytic converter being disposed in a space surrounded by an exhaust passage-defining member and a lid detachably coupled to the exhaust passage-defining member, and the exhaust passage-defining member including an opening to permit the exhaust gas to flow thereinto, as claimed in claim 6.

For at least this reason, Applicants submit that claim 6 is allowable over the cited prior art.

For all of the above reasons, it is respectfully submitted that the claims now pending patentability distinguish the present invention over the cited references. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the outstanding rejections and an issuance of a Notice of Allowance are earnestly solicited.

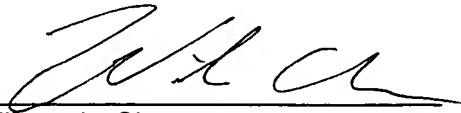
Should the Examiner determine that any further action is necessary to place this application into better form, the Examiner is encouraged to telephone the undersigned representative at the number indicated.

In the event this paper is not considered to be timely filed, the Applicants respectfully petition for an appropriate extension of time. Any fees for such an extension, together with any additional fees that may be due with respect to this paper, may be charged to counsel's Deposit Account No. 01-2300.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date



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Enclosure: Petition for Extension of Time (3 months)